

Overview of Nigeria's R & D Plan for Lassa fever

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Preparing for Lassa Vaccine Clinical Trials with Targeted Epidemiology
Studies Workshop

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Introduction

- 50 years since discovery of Lassa virus in Nigeria, still many unanswered questions
- Clearly an urgent need to conduct planned research during outbreaks to generate information to guide public health response
- Nigeria set out to develop a coherent set of national research priorities during LF outbreaks

Based on the WHO R & D Blueprint

Objectives are to:

- Set in place a mechanism in Nigeria to facilitate the coordination of all research efforts related to Lassa fever
 - Prioritize & facilitate multiple local & international partner requests based on local needs
- Provide answers to unanswered questions & increase knowledge about the disease
- Expand existing research capacity in Nigeria

Goal is to improve the following

- Adequate information about transmission
- Diagnostics
- Therapeutics
- Preventives
- Engagement with communities and effective risk communication
- Better infection prevention measures
- Identify and protect high risk groups

The Nigeria National LF Research Plan



Covers 3 Areas of Work

1. Prevention
 2. Detection
 3. Response & Preparedness
- Other mechanisms to improve the research environment for Lassa Fever & others

Overview of the plan

- Retrospective data analyses
- Observational studies
- Surveys
- Clinical trials
- Anthropologic studies
- Lab based Assay evaluations (diagnostics)
- Clinical trials – therapeutics, preventives

Prevention

Questions to be answered by the LF NRP

- What are factors driving transmission within the community? – to strengthen risk communication
- What are the behavioural risk factors associated with rodent-human transmission?
- What are the ecological factors associated with rodent-human transmission?
- What are effective approaches/interventions for reducing risk of transmission?
 - How can they be evaluated effectively

Detection

Questions to be answered by the LF NRP

- What are the circulating strains in different parts of the country
- Surveillance for possible new evolving new strains or new virulent mechanisms
- Differential diagnosis for LF disease
- Evaluation of new diagnostics so standardized lab tests are available to support research and response efforts
- Strengthening of surveillance methods

Response & Preparedness

Questions to be answered by the LF NRP

- What are the predictors of survival/mortality with Lf disease?
- What are the clinical and laboratory indicators of severity of disease?
- What are the components of preferred standard of care
- Efficacy trials for available/candidate therapeutics & preventives

What has been done so far

- NRP – LF was refined in collaboration with WHO & other stakeholders – July 2018
- Observational cohort study of Lassa fever clinical Course and Prognostic factors in an Epidemic (LASCOPE) context in Nigeria currently ongoing at FMC Owo – 2018
- Discussion on formation of Consortium for research coordination at the 3 major LF treatment centres
- NCDC In-house research proposal development workshop in September 2018
- Guideline development for time sensitive review of protocols including those of interventional products

Other mechanisms in progress

- Assessment of the 3 major treatment centres to provide minimum requirements for treatment of LF/VHF
- Finalising Consortium for research coordination at the 3 major LF treatment centres, others to join in phases
- Involvement of NFELTP residents/grads in LF research
- Harmonisation of data collection tools
- Finalisation of harmonised treatment guideline review
- Implementation of plan for longer term storage of samples to enable exploration of research questions
- Plan for GCP training November 2018

Discussions

